

REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Non-Final Office Action dated April 8, 2005. Claims 8-25 were examined. Note that the claims, originally numbered 20-37 were renumbered to comply with 37 CFR 1.126.

Claims 8-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sakata (US 5,166,464). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons given below.

With respect to independent claims 8, applicants respectfully submit that Sakata fails to teach the claimed comparator coupled to said memory for periodically comparing the current value (of the volume component) with the final value to determine if the current value is less than, greater than, or equal to said final value. Nor does Sakata teach an incrementor that increments the current value in response to a determination by the comparator that the current value is less than the final value and decrements the current value in response to a determination by the comparator that the current value is greater than the final value.

Sakata teaches controlling a sound volume of the reverberation sound. See, e.g., col. 2 lines 18-39, col. 11, lines 31-49 and col. 12, lines 6-29. However, Sakata does not teach the volume control approach claimed herein that includes the current and final values, the comparator and the incrementor. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that claim 8 and all claims dependent thereon distinguish over Sakata.

With respect to claim 10 Sakata fails to teach that the increment or decrement is by a value of one.

With respect to claim 11, applicants respectfully submit that Sakata fails to teach the claimed comparator coupled to said first and second storage devices for periodically comparing the current value (of the volume component) with the final value to determine if the current value is less than, greater than, or equal to said final value. Nor does Sakata teach an incrementor that increments the current value in response to a determination by the comparator that the current value is less than the final value and decrements the current value in response to a determination by the comparator that the current value is greater than the final value.

With respect to claim 14, applicants respectfully submit that Sakata fails to teach the claimed comparator for periodically comparing a current value of a volume component with a final value of said volume component to determine if the current value is less than, greater than, or equal to said final value. Nor does Sakata teach an incrementor configured to increment the current value in response to a determination by the comparator that the current value is less than said final value, and configured to decrement the current value in response to a determination by the comparator that the current value is greater than the final value.

With respect to claims 18, 19, and 20 applicants respectfully submit that Sakata fails to teach comparing means for periodically comparing the current value (of the volume component) with the final value to determine if the current value is less than, greater than, or equal to the final value. Nor does Sakata teach incrementing means coupled for incrementing the current value in response to a determination by the comparing means that the current value is less than the final value, and decrementing the current value in response to a determination by the comparing means that the current value is greater than the final value.

With respect to claim 21, applicants respectfully submit that Sakata fails to teach reading the current and final values (of the volume component) and comparing the values to determine if the current value is less than, greater than, or equal to the final value. Nor does Sakata teach incrementing the current value if the current value is less than the final value, decrementing the current value if the current value is greater than the final value, and not changing said current value if said current value is equal to said final value.

In summary, claims 8-25 are in the case. All claims are believed to be allowable over the art of record, and a Notice of Allowance to that effect is respectfully solicited. Nonetheless, if any issues remain that could be more efficiently handled by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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